

Barks N' Growls

From the Admin's Desk:



Winter is in full swing, and January has been cold so far. Don't forget to bundle up while waiting for the bus. Drive safely on the snow and ice-packed gravel roads. Watch or listen for school cancellations on tv, the radio, or our Facebook page. Thank you to all who come out and have supported our Bulldog Basketball players and our Cheerleaders, whether they play here at Ballard or at Montrose. Don't forget to check out our Archers and cheer them on as well. As Spring gets closer, so does the Track and Baseball season. Our Track team will practice here at Ballard, but our Baseball team will be playing baseball over at Montrose. Be sure to get out in the warm Spring air to cheer them on. This year, there is a lot of legislation proposed by lawmakers that will affect Missouri schools in 2026. This includes mandated potential 60-minute daily PE requirements and school choice expansions. Key changes include debates on A-F school ratings and screen-time limits (HB 2230). The Governor would also like to appoint a board that would oversee the Missouri State High School Activities Association and its interscholastic activities (SB 863). Please stay tuned in, and we will be watching these bills and seeing how they will play out.



The Ballard R-2 School District would like to give a big shout-out to Troop 1238 and, more importantly, to Gavin Schleim. Gavin chose to fix our baseball bleachers for his Eagle Scout project by adding new wood and paint. As the weather begins to change and we begin to get ready for the summer baseball season, we wanted to thank him for his hard work and for choosing a project that gives back to our Bulldog community. Thank you for taking care of your community, Gavin! -David Andrade, Ballard Superintendent

Senior Spotlight:

Lucas Crump, 17, is the son of Josh and Crystal Crump, and the brother of Dani, Henry, Abigail, and Violet. His favorite color is blue, and his favorite class is Vo-tech. Lucas's dream vehicle is a Corvette Stingray. His favorite song is "One" by Metallica. His favorite restaurant is Mexican, and his favorite food is lasagna. Lucas's hobbies include welding, archery, and video games. His biggest pet peeve is loud people. Lucas plans to weld after graduating. In 15 years, Lucas sees himself working. His famous last words are "whoops."

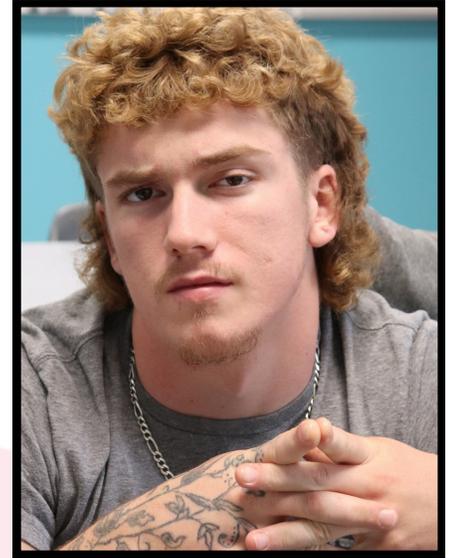


Autumn Hastings, 18, is the daughter of Josh and Renee Hastings and the sister of Alexis, Violet, Charlotte, and Summer. Her favorite color is pink, and her favorite class is iCEV. Autumn's dream vehicle is a car. Her favorite song is "Cute Without The E" by Taking Back Sunday. Her favorite restaurant is Peniku, and her favorite food is sushi. Autumn's hobbies include working. Her biggest pet peeve is annoying people. Autumn's plans after graduating are to get her LPN. In 15 years, Autumn sees herself making lots of money. Her famous last words are "I'm tired."



Senior Spotlight:

Cash Anderson, 18, is the brother of Serenity Oerke and grandson of Terry Burris. His favorite color is blue, and his favorite class is work study. Cash's dream vehicle is a Shelby Mustang. His favorite song is "My Own Prison" by Creed. His favorite restaurant is El Camino, and his favorite food is steak. Cash's hobbies include hunting and fishing. His biggest pet peeve is loud people with high-pitched voices. Cash's plans after graduating are to go on as many hunting and fishing trips out of state as possible. In 15 years, Cash sees himself exactly where he wants to be. His famous last words are "Have you seen my wallet?"

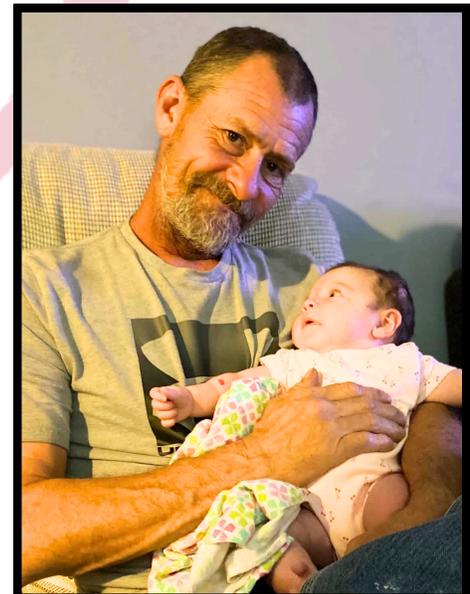


Staff Spotlight:

Erin Wainscott, 40, is the wife of Nathaniel Wainscott and the mother of students, Macie and Maxton Wainscott. Her favorite color is teal, and her dream car is a blue Volkswagen Beetle. Erin's favorite song is "Homesick for Heaven" by Phil Wickham. Her favorite food is lasagna and cheeseburgers, and her favorite restaurant is Pepper Jax and 54th Street. Erin's hobbies are crafting, napping, shopping, and watching sports. Her biggest pet peeve is the phrase "6 7". Her favorite thing about working here is that she has Mondays off! Erin sees herself in 15 years, hopefully still living on God's green earth with a plethora of cats and chickens. Erin's famous last words are "Make good choices!"



Randy Blankenship, 50, is the husband of Kim Blankenship and the father of Jordyn Blankenship, Katlin Blankenship, Sammy Blankenship, Skyla Blankenship, and Abigail Ewing. His favorite color is teal, and his dream car is a "Lambo". Randy's favorite song is "When I'm Gone" by Three Doors Down. His favorite food is pork chops, mashed potatoes, and gravy, and his favorite restaurant is Olive Garden. Randy's hobbies are hunting, fishing, and enjoying God's country. His biggest pet peeve is being told to "shut up". His favorite thing about working here is cleaning and keeping the school looking nice. Randy sees himself in 15 years being retired. His famous last words are "Look out."



January Elementary Student of the Month

Graysen Mayfield

Graysen Mayfield is one of my best students in my class! It was not always this way. Graysen struggled at the beginning of the year with some behaviors; Yet he had the courage to KEEP trying to improve. He had the resilience it takes to make REAL change!

Graysen shows me daily how courageous he can be when trying a new concept or learning a new word. He never gives up! He is a resilient boy that once he sets his mind to do something, he will accomplish it.

I'm so proud of his determination to grow as a student. I truly look forward to seeing what his courage and resilience will lead him to as he grows.

~Mrs. West

Graysen has shown growth in behavior and I can see it on the playground and around his peers.

~Mrs. Hathcock

Henry Crump

Henry shows courage and resilience each day in our classroom and throughout our school. He approaches challenges with determination and continues to try, even when things feel difficult. Henry does not give up easily, and his willingness to learn from mistakes shows true strength of character. He also demonstrates courage by being himself and doing what is right, even when it takes extra effort. His positive attitude and perseverance make him a wonderful role model for others. I am very proud of the growth he shows and the resilience he brings to our classroom community.

~Mrs. Bailey

Henry works hard and tries his best.

~Mrs. Hathcock

Henry faces more challenges than some of his peers but always works hard!

~Mrs. West

January HS/MS Student of the Month

Vivian Greer

Vivian is a hard worker that I essentially never have a problem with

~Mr. Duncan

I remember her as a hard working student!

~Mrs. West

She is kind and caring to her peers and is a good friend to all. I enjoy having her in class!

~Ms. Burgin

Vivian definitely deserves to be named student of the month, especially for resilience. I have watched her through the years overcome difficulty after difficulty with grace and a good attitude. She is enthusiastic (especially about books) and caring. So proud of you, Vivian, for being SOM!

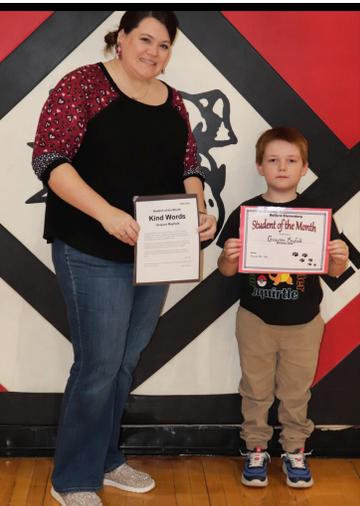
~Mr. Bergen

Addison Fields-Wareham

Addi has shown great resilience this year. I have seen her work hard to overcome the struggles she is facing, and continue to be the best student she can be. She definitely will keep you on your toes with her sense of humor and personality, and Ballard School is a better place because she is here. Congrats on being SOM!

~Mr. Bergen

Addi demonstrates courage and resilience in the way she shows up every day, even when things aren't easy. She faces challenges head-on, keeps moving forward, and never lets obstacles define her effort or attitude. Her determination, honesty, and ability to push through tough moments are exactly what these traits are about. Addi's strength doesn't go unnoticed, and we are proud to recognize her as Student of the Month.



December Student of the Month

Congrats to the students of the month for December, Senior *Gracie-Marie Prock*, 8th grader *Kennedy King*, 4th grader *Bella Bergman*, and Kindergartener *Asher Borland*.

Here are the kind words from the staff: Kennedy is a very kind and sweet girl. She is positive and is very respectful. ~Mrs. Wainscott
Kennedy is a quiet leader who sets a great example. She is kind to everyone, always tries her best, and brings a positive attitude to class. She is a joy to have in class and makes our class better. ~Mrs. Davis. She is kind and caring to her peers and is a good friend to all. I enjoy having her in class! ~Ms. Burgin...

I am happy to have Kennedy in class with me this semester. She is such a sweet person and always wants to do the best she can on anything she does. Congratulations, Kennedy, and keep up the good work! ~Mr. Gregory...

Although I do not have her in class, every time I pass her in the hall, Kennedy smiles and says hello. Last year, as her math teacher, I watched her show perseverance and patience. Kennedy has always been generous with kindness and friendship to all, and she is well deserving of Student of the Month! ~Mr. Bergen...

Kennedy always has a smile on her face and a kind word for everyone. Kennedy works hard in everything she does and consistently gives 100%. She encourages others, shows leadership, and is both responsible and reliable. She has a positive attitude even on hard days and is a joy to have in class! ~Mrs. Trickey...

Gracie-Marie works hard during FACS. She gets all of her work done and turned in on time. ~Mrs. Wainscott...

Gracie-Marie shows empathy by being kind to others, noticing when classmates may need support, and offering help or encouragement when it is needed. She demonstrates appreciation by showing respect to her teachers and peers and by recognizing the efforts of others, helping create a caring and positive classroom and school environment. ~Mrs. Bailey...

Gracie-Marie is always a joy to have in class, so it's a good thing I have her in three this year! If she's not sleepy from staying up too late and getting up early to care for the farm animals, then she is usually a super-bubbly person and enjoys keeping everyone guessing what she will do or say next. She is super exuberant in anything she does...for example, she holds the state record for most pictures taken at a single basketball game for the school newspaper at 2,251 -- keep up the positive attitude and kindly spirit and you will go far! ~Mr. Gregory...

Gracie-Marie may be new to Ballard this year, but with her confidence, you wouldn't know it. As her sponsor and math teacher, I can tell you she is outspoken and passionate, as well as authentic. *Gracie-Marie* is unapologetically herself, and it is refreshing. Don't let anyone convince you to dim your shine. Congratulations on being chosen as SOM! ~Mr. Bergen...

Bella consistently shows empathy by noticing when others need help and offering kindness, encouragement, or a listening ear. She also demonstrates appreciation by thanking her classmates and teachers, respecting their efforts, and helping create a positive, supportive environment throughout the classroom and school. ~Mrs. Bailey...

Bella is a good friend to her peers. She listens and is respectful in class and always does as she is asked quickly and quietly. It has been a joy having her in class this year. ~Mrs. Bergen...

Asher works hard in Art Class. He likes to take his time to make sure his projects are complete. ~Mrs. Wainscott

He is always kind to others and listens well to directions. He shows generosity to his peers and teachers by listening and being kind to all, and not arguing. ~Ms. Burgin...

Asher is thoughtful, warm-hearted, and deeply empathetic. He has a gentle way of understanding others and making them feel seen and valued. His kindness shows through in both his words and actions, and his presence brings comfort and reassurance. *Asher's* patience, sincerity, and genuine care create a sense of trust and appreciation in those around him. He is someone whose compassion leaves a lasting, positive impression. ~Mrs. Strunk



Sports Pages

HS Basketball



**The boys have a
10-9 season so
far!**



**The girls have a
12-9 season so
far!**

HS Cheer

**Take a moment to appreciate your cheerleaders
and all the hard work they do to bring spirit to
Ballard!**

**Your cheerleaders for this year are: Haley Pray,
Taylinn Hester, & Macie Wainscott!**



**What do the cheerleaders like about
being a cheerleader?:**

Haley: What I like about being a cheerleader is that we get to do fun cheers and wear cute outfits.

Macie: What I like about being a cheerleader is that I get to be loud and proud.

Taylinn: My favorite thing about being a cheerleader is being able to be at all the games and support our school athletes and cheering with Haley.



Court Warming 2026

**Congratulations
Emmalee Scott and
Waylon Chrisman for
winning Court
Warming King and
Queen!**



Counselor's Corner



This month at school, we've been focusing on two important words: courage and resilience. While they may sound like big ideas, we see them in small, everyday moments—raising a hand in class, asking for help, trying again after a setback, or stepping into something new, even when it feels uncomfortable. Courage isn't the absence of fear; it's choosing to move forward anyway. Resilience is what helps us keep going when things don't go as planned.

I've especially seen these qualities in action while meeting one-on-one with our seniors as they plan for life after graduation. Whether students are preparing for college, technical school, or entering the workforce, these conversations require honesty, self-reflection, and bravery. Making decisions about the future can feel overwhelming, and it takes courage to talk openly about hopes, doubts, and next steps. It also takes resilience to adjust plans, face uncertainty, and trust yourself in the process.

As we continue to grow and learn together, I hope that all students remember this: you don't have to have everything figured out to move forward. Each step—no matter how small—builds confidence and strength. Courage and resilience aren't just words of the month; they're skills you're developing every day, and they will serve you well far beyond the walls of our school.

Kelsi Bergen

Archery



We have been having a great season so far!

We have already had 2 meets!

Our next meets are:

2/7 - @ Clinton Middle School

2/14 - @ The Linc in Jefferson City

2/21 - @ Clinton High School

2/23 - @ Ballard

2/28 - @ Lakeland

Farm show Feb. 20th

Ag & FFA

**Students cannot attend farmshow if they have
outstanding bills**

FFA week Feb. 24-27th

**FFA business/community breakfast starting @
6:30 in the AG room.**



The Ballard Food Pantry

We were pleased to be able to work with the FFA and Mrs. Trickey to provide food and household items to eleven local families the third week of December, before the Christmas break. In December, a local church collected hats, gloves, and socks, which we received in the first part of January, and distributed them to the families. Another local church provided a donation to support our grocery funds. Funds and food donations were also received from a local charitable organization and from individuals in the community. Currently, we are sending 15 backpacks home with students each week. With generous donations from the community, we were able to purchase 20 pairs of shoes and socks for the Angel Tree students and helped 2 families keep their utilities on during the coldest winter months. We are thankful for all the financial support this community provides to make these programs possible, including Cove Creek Church, the Enterprise Club, and Walnut Grove Church.

Norma Jones

Enchanting English



Ahhhh.... The third quarter is the best quarter of the year. It marks the beginning of the end of the school year, and when 5 of the 6 ELA classes are reading plays. The dramatics class just finished Oedipus Rex. The Bard himself, Shakespeare, is providing the meat on which the rest of the classes will feast. The freshmen are reading Romeo and Juliet, and finding out what a smooth talker Romeo was. The sophomores are reading Taming of the Shrew and learning what a bully Petrucio was. The juniors are reading Hamlet and watching as Hamlet struggles to avenge his father's "most foul and unnatural murder." The seniors are reading, my personal favorite, the Scottish play, Macbeth, but shhhh, don't say it out loud!

~Mrs. Gregory

5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Jay

- rocking chairs
- magnatiles
- epic
- snacks
- recess

The best things about...

THE FEARLESS FIRST

5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Mason

- Magnetic Tiles
- Playing at Recess
- Videos on Smartboard
- Drawing Pictures
- Snack time

5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Chloe

- I like epic
- I like my teacher
- I like my friends
- I like my school
- I like my desk

5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Khloe

- I like the McDonalds
- I love snacks
- I like Charlotte
- I love my friends
- I like Epic

5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Paisley

- I love mom and dad and Cheryl
- I love Magh tiles
- I love friends
- I like one every Epic
- I love writing

5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Gracie

- playground
- friends
- seeing a baby goat
- math
- math

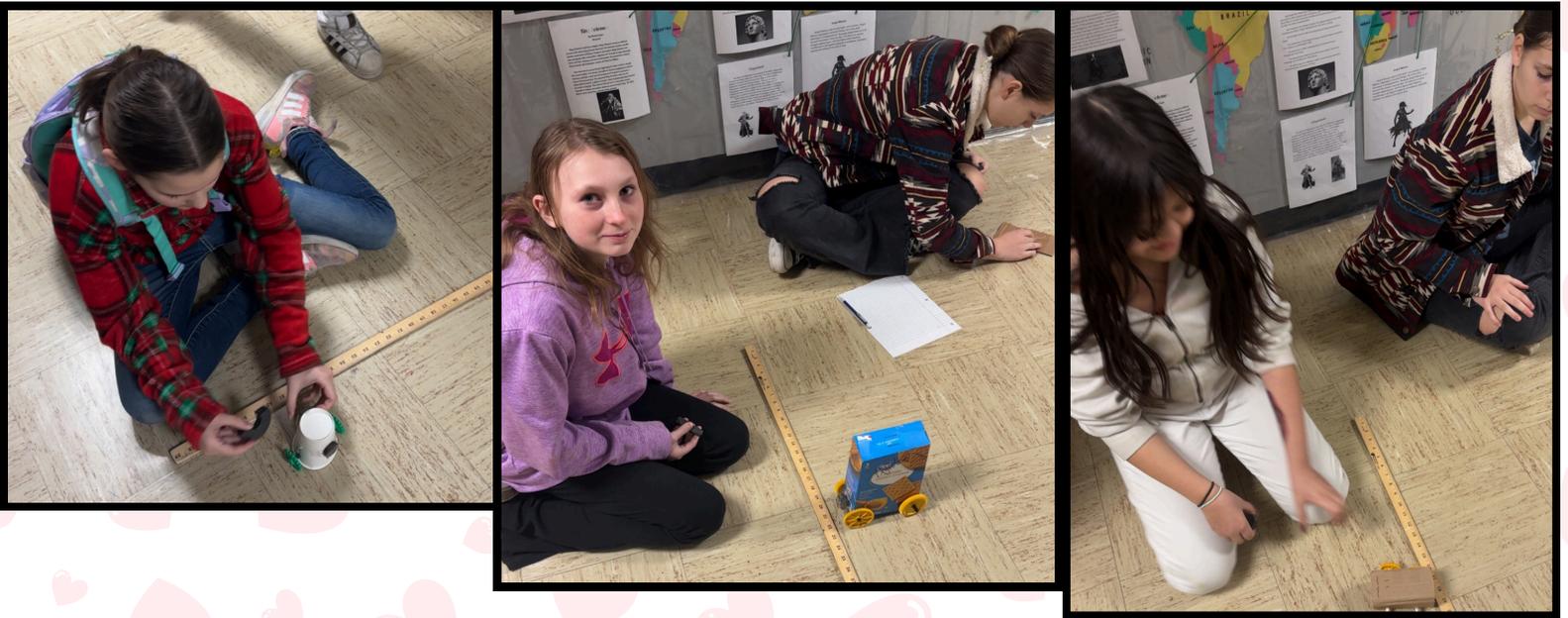
5 Reasons Why I Love First Grade
Name: Otto

- I love my teacher
- I love epic
- seeing a baby goat
- I like recess
- I like Jay



Stubborn Sixth

6th grade had a competition of who's magnet powered car could go the furthest in 30 seconds. Navi's car ended up going about 5x further than second place!



Ablaze Of Art

Art and design are in full swing across the district. In High School Art 1, students are applying their drawing skills through a two-point perspective treehouse painting project, focusing on depth, structure, and creative problem-solving. Meanwhile, High School FACS students are diving into the world of Fashion Design, researching clothing styles from different historical eras to better understand how culture and time influence fashion trends. At the elementary level, Art students have been exploring radial symmetry and expressive techniques using heart mark lines, creating bold and balanced designs that showcase both creativity and foundational art skills.



The second semester has been a slow burn for the sophomores, but it's nothing we can't handle. The cooking chemistry class is preparing to do a cookie exchange. Jacob, in particular, is excited to make snickerdoodle cookies for the assignment (and hopefully for our class.) The kids in Ag and Ecology have spent their time building tables for the fancy new greenhouse, and the Scholar Bowl and Envirothon students have been studying hard to prepare for their upcoming events. Taylinn has been working hard on cheerleading, and Harry has been honing his basketball skills. We have studied lots and lots for our constitution test in Government. Nathan and Owen recently made a full deck of cards with nothing but their coding skills in Mr. Bergin's coding class. Mrs. Gregory is preparing to make us read "Taming of the Shrew" for our poetry unit, although not everyone is as excited about it as Jacob and Nathan. All in all, our class has been working very hard this winter, and we don't plan on stopping anytime soon. Go Bulldogs!

Teacher's Advice of the month

I have been thinking about grades lately. A, B, C, D, F... 98%, 75%, 67%... We stress so much about a letter and a number. I realize that our futures are impacted by GPA and a diploma. I am not saying that we should do away with the gradebook. Here's my story: I am the one who heard from my mom throughout all of school, "If you want to go to college, you're going to have to get scholarships." I took that to heart and spent countless hours studying—alone and in groups—all to obtain the coveted 4.0 GPA at graduation. I did it...but you know what? I wish I could go back and try again. I might still get a 4.0 (after all, you should give your best effort in everything you do—whether school, sports, work, etc.), but I had an unhealthy relationship with grades. Anxiety-ridden. Constantly checking. Emailing professors for bonus points. There are those on the other side, too, who simply view a grade as the bar—the minimum they must reach to pass. "As long as I have XYZ grades, I can still play sports," or "I won't be grounded," etc. Here is the problem with both of these outlooks: school is not about grades. I'll say that again, because I hear it all the time—"Is this for a grade?" SCHOOL IS NOT ABOUT GRADES. School is about learning. It is where we build a foundation so that when we leave this place, we can pursue whatever life has in store for us. So the next time you are sitting through class, remember that teachers are here because we want you to learn—not just pass our class, not just get an A—but learn. My success as a teacher is when you graduate and move on to the next phase of life prepared. Bonus points if you find yourself learning as an adult. Those are my words of wisdom: never stop learning. Keep on, *Mr. Micah Bergen*

As a teacher, my advice to students at all grade levels is to approach each school day with a positive attitude and a commitment to learning. Academic growth takes time, effort, and perseverance, and challenges are an important part of that process. Students should not be afraid to ask questions, seek help, or learn from mistakes, as these experiences build understanding and resilience. Equally important is demonstrating respect, responsibility, and kindness toward others, as strong character supports success both inside and outside the classroom. Developing good habits such as staying organized, managing time effectively, and completing work with care will serve students well throughout their education. Above all, students should believe in their abilities and understand that consistent effort and a willingness to learn can lead to meaningful achievement. In addition, students should remember that education is about more than grades or test scores; it is about growth, curiosity, and becoming a capable, confident individual. Taking pride in one's work, setting personal goals, and reflecting on progress help build independence and motivation. Listening carefully, following directions, and contributing positively to the learning environment allow everyone to succeed together. Students who show perseverance, integrity, and a willingness to improve will be well prepared not only for the next grade level but also for future challenges beyond the classroom. -*Mrs. Bailey 4th and 5th grade teacher*

Jaw-Dropping Juniors

This January, the Junior class won third place in the float contest during our 2026 courtwarming after not having it last year. The theme for courtwarming this year for our float was “Hollywood”. The float was based on the Oscars, so that meant our bulldog shone the brightest and walked the red carpet like a pro, and of course won the Oscar over the NEVC Knights.

We have also spoken more about prom over the past few weeks, mostly on the topics of food and decorations.

Slaying Seniors

We, seniors, are excited for prom, the senior trip, and graduation.

We are quickly checking off our list of tasks for graduation! Also, remember to stop by the snack closet! Thank you all for the support! P.S., seniors, remember to get all your stuff turned in to Mr. Bergen!



FUN PAGE

Valentine's Day CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- _____ and kisses; xoxo
- A cherub with a bow and love arrows
- You're the _____ of my life
- Will you be my _____?
- A cute and cuddly bear given as a gift
- The shape that represents love
- The month in which Valentine's Day occurs

DOWN

- Multicolored candy often seen with phrases like "Be Mine" and "Miss You"
- When Valentines Day themed, these usually have cute, funny, or romantic phrases on them
- A beautiful flower given to show affection, often red
- A box of this delicious treat is a popular gift to give a valentine
- To express your emotions you might write your valentine one

What **did one rabbit say to the other?**
"Somebunny **loves you.**"



How **do farmers celebrate Valentine's Day?**
With **hogs and kisses.**



Be mine